## IT HAPPENED In NIGHT - By Edgar Wallace

phine is the business head of the family, and calls her father by his first name. She has this weakness: that she believes a day will dawn when there will walk into her ken a greatly desired criminal for whose arrest a fabulous reward is offered. Georgina aspires to be a playwright and the members of the family assist her in rehearsing her plays. Helen is a very prim and punctilious little girl of fifteen, just out of school. The Yeomans have rented one of their spare rooms to a Summer boarder named Jones, who is expected to arrive in a few days. Cicero Jones, known as "The Tremendous Jones" in the theatrical world, is a reader for managers. His opinion of the availability of plays is considered infallible. Before he leaves on his Summer vacation a manager gives him two of Georgina's plays to read while he is away. He does not know that the author is a member of the family with whom he is going to spend his vacation. Josephine is reading in a local paper that there has been a big bank robbery and the burglar is headed in their direction when Georgina calls a rehearsal of one of her plays. (Continued from Last Sunday)

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters. TORDAN YEOMAN is a gentleman farmer with three daughters. Jose-

phine is the business head of the family, and calls her father by his

CHAPTER V. **▼O a man with predilections** toward a smooth-running life, it was something of a hanticap and an inquietude to be related to stage-struck women. Not that either was stage-struck in the accepted sense of the word. Georgie wrote plays; to Jordan they were good, but then, he knew nothing about plays or authors.

But of all the drawback which this play-writing business presented none equalled in point of inconvenience, amounting sometimes to a positive misery, this detestable practice of roping him in to read a part in one of Georgie's rehearsals.

"Must I rehearse? These hasty meals are going to play the devil with my digestion," he com, ained but none the less obeyed.

"Help push the table over in the corner, Jordan," said his ener-getic daughter. "Exercise is what you want."
Mrs. Mumble, an interested spectator of the moving scene,

"Will you be wanting me, miss?" she asked.

Georgina consulted her scrit'. "Let me see, what were you?" "I was the young lady that led the young gentleman into tempta-tion," said Mrs. Mumble hope-

Georgina shook her head. "That was the farce—no, this is the drama, "The Wanderer," Mrs. Mumble—there isn't a part for

A disgruntled actress went back to the kitchen and the peeling of

A clear space was now made. Josephine, trained in dining-room stage craft, had rearranged the furniture to meet the requirements of the scene, and now turned her attention to Jordan. That worthy man had stealthily pulled his chair to the fireplace and had unobtrusively disappeared from view.
"Jordan?" called Joseph called Josephine

sharply. There was no answer. "Jordan! Damn the boy, he's gone to sleep again!" "Oh!" a horrified gasp from Helen.

"Well?" Josephine snapped, "it is a classical quotation—from Dickens.' "To one's own father!" said the

shocked Helen. "To three's own father, if you don't mind," said Josephine. 'You're not the only child. Jordan!"

Jordan woke with a start. 'What do I do?" he complained. "You can sit where you are," said Josephine. "You're Sir Milford Scarborough."

"Oh," said Jordan blankly. Georgina rumpled his hair. "You haven't got much to say, so don't grouch, darling," she coaxed and Jordan growled again. "I'm not grouching. But why am I always the villain?"

"All Georgina's male characters are villains," explained Helen. "Even the clergymen. I'm not saying they aren't true to life. Clergymen can be as bad as anybody, but—"
"I wish you'd keep the Sunday

papers out of that child's hands, Georgie," said Josephine in de-"Now, is everybody ready?" Everybody was ready. Mr. Yeoman, with his script on his knee, nedded heavily.

"Go ahead, Georgie."
Georgina had retired to the

vicinity of the stairs. Now she stalked tragically toward the dozing Jordan.
"'Have you nothing to say to

me?"" she asked in hollow tones. Apparently Jordan hadn't. Go on, Jordan!" encouraged Josephine anxiously.

Jordan blinked. "Eh-er-what?"

"'Have you nothing to say to me?" " repeated Georgina, and her father fumbled with the manu-

"'Nothing,'" he read rapidly and monotonously, "'you have made your bed, lie on it, lie on it—, by the way, who made my bed last night, Jo?"

Josephine dropped into a chair with a moan of anguish. They forgot to take the extra blanket off, that's all," explained

Jordan hurriedly. "Will you leave these sordid matters until after we have finished!" demanded the exasperated stage manager. "Get on with the

play!"
"Have you nothing to say to asked Georgina for the

third time. 'Nothin,' " read Jordan.

"'You have made your own bed, lie on it, lie on it, lie on it!""

"'And this is the reward of my devotion," said Georgina clasping her hands tragically. "'For this I loved you, left my home, my friends, gave up my career! Ah, you can smile! When I see you

standing there with your head held high, looking at me with contempt -I recognize the devil lurking in

your eyes. My God! What a fool Helen shuddered. "I know you'll think I'm a prude," she said, "but there's an awful lot of profanity in this play. Remember, Georgina, children may

be taken to see this.'

"Oh, shut up, Helen! You can always tone it down for the matinees-go on Georgina." But Georgina had for the mo-

ment given up the attempt to re-"I can't possibly get any idea how this is going if I am con-stantly interrupted. And I do so

want to know how it will appeal to the managers."

"I'm sure people won't like it," insisted Helen. "At St. Margaret's we always cut the D's and the G's out of our plays."
"Oh, smother St. Margaret's!"

said Josephine wildly. "Go on, Georgina. Georgina took up her script

again.
"'What — a — fool — I've been-what a fool I've been! But beware, Milford Scarborough! Beware! Ha! You start! So I have touched you on the raw! You need not frown at me! You cannot make me fear you. Heaven will not allow such a man as you to triumph! You smile'—this is

where you come on, Jo." "Oh, yes!" "'Lady Violet!" " breathed

Georgina.
"'What are you doing here with
my husband?" demanded Josephine sternly.

"'Your husband, ha, ha, ha!'" sneered Georgina. Josephine's eyebrows rose.

"'Your attitude is strange, Mildred Burton-Great God!' Helen made a disparaging noise.

"You can go out if you don't like it, Helen!" said Josephine furiously, "but for heaven's sake don't sniff!"

"I do think you're overdoing it, really!" said Helen with resigna-"Why not 'Good Gracious!" At St. Margaret's-

"Shut your ears if it shocks you," suggested Josephine and was once more the injured heroine. "Now then—'What is this man to

" 'He-is-my-husband!" " said Georgina tragically. Josephine started back. "'Ah, no! No! No!"

"Four 'no's,' " murmured the disapproving prompter.

"'No. It is not true—it is not ter — ue!" gasped Josephine. 'My-goodness! It's not true. Milford! Say that it is not true! Speak!" She dropped her hand on Jordan's shoulder and shook "Here! Wake up, Jordan! You're snoring when you ought to be sneering!"

Jordan came to consciousness with a painful grimace. "Eh, what—oh, yes. perish, let him perish!" 'Let him Dramatist and stage manager

howled together. "You don't start perishing anybody until the last act," said Josephine with painful calm. "You've got the wrong page, Jordan, let me show you—there you are—'It is false, false, false!"

'Oh, yes, I see. 'It is false, false, false'-what about a pipe?" he pleaded.

"You'll get no pipe until we've finished this act," hissed Josephine. "Now sneer! That's not a sneer that's a sniff! Go on Georgina." "'Milford! You cannot mean that! Ah, no! You are jesting, Milford! You cannot deny your wife—your innocent child! You

do! I see it in your eyes!' "'You turn your head away. You laugh! You laugh! Ah, woe -woe! My-heavens, he laughs!" ("Och!" snored Jordan, his chindropping to his chest.) "Then dropping to his chest.) am indeed lost! How can you look me in the face? Have you told me the worst, Milford?" Mrs. Mumble put her head in at

the door. "The milk's gone bad, miss." Josephine said something. Helen,

seeing it coming, closed her ears. "We'll never keep Jordan awake," said Georgina in despair, after the shocked Mrs. Mumble had hurriedly withdrawn. "He always does this after tea. Really he is terrible. And I did so want to see how it would go."

Josephine slipped her arm about

her sister's shoulder and, hugged "My dear, don't worry, this is a

great play. The bit we've done shows that. Honestly, Helen, don't you think so?" Helen, thus appealed to, as-

sumed a new importance: "Do you wish me to be frank?" "If you're going to be frank," said Georgina, "you can shut up!"
"Honestly, lovie-babe," said "Honestly, Josephine cuddling the frigie Helen, "don't you think it will hit 'em in the eye?" "Do you mean will it be a suc-

"It might be," Helen committed herself that far, and her sister

"There you are Georgie-even this miserable little rat says it might be., This is the play that's going to make you, Georgie—mark you, woman! Oh, what a first night—can't you see all your friends in front of the house applauding like mad?"

'Suppose they don't," said "Why do you think we let 'em in for nothing?" demanded Jose-"And can't you see the papers in the morning. 'The play was received with every mark of favor by an enthusiastic audience.

There were loud cries of 'author!' "From the author's friends?" suggested Helen, and Josephine glared at her.

"You're just like a great big beam of sunlight soap. Georgie, it is no use trying to wake our dear parent. Let us do the scene between Gwendoline and her sister. You know-where Gertrude confesses she killed Gwendoline's lover."

Helen shrugged. "I'm perfectly sure there will be young men in the audience who will be absolutely revolted," she said, "but, of course, it is nothing to do with me.'

Josephine lugged a screen across the room and unfolded it so that it obscured the door. Now we can get the illusion of being in the New Forest," she said.

"Who starts? I think I do." CHAPTER VI.

R. CICERO JONES had had a pleasant and, in some respects, an instructive journey from town. On the train he met an acquaintance, an elderly

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"How interesting!" said Cicero Jones, and swallowed hard. "I tell you the country is the place for real horrors," said the gouty doctor thoroughly enjoying "Like the country, eh?" comhimself. "I could tell you stories plained the old doctor, a hard, yelwhich would make your hair stand low-faced man who was a martyr

with the body in a lime kiln. It was never found. She only comes

out at night and vanders through

the garden, and in the daytime she is invisible."

on end with a little encourage-

ment. I have been called into

cases-I am giving away no pro-

fessional secrets—that have so

filled me with fear that I haven't

been able to sleep at night. Do you see that barn this side of the

wood?" he pointed to a distant

"Was anybody murdered there?"

"Six people," said the doctor impressively. "Murdered by a

person who seemed to be the most

harmless creature in the world. In

fact, she was a patient of mine.

It was rather a coincidence, too,'

he mused, "because on that tree-

the big tree you see without any

leaves on-it looks as though it is

dead, though it isn't-old Samson

Bottlehook hanged himself, as his

father had before him. And on

the other side of Dead Man's

"What is the name?" asked

"They call it Dead Man's Copse

about here, but I don't know the story of it," said the doctor care-

lessly. "It is probably to do with

some crime of years gone by. But

on the other side is the county hos-

pital-you'll see the mortuary in

a minute, when we get round this

bend, it is the only white block in

see it particularly," said Cicero

Jones. "That's a nice-looking house," he pointed, and then hur-

hanged or poisoned or gone mad there, you needn't tell me about

"That's the Widdle's house,"

"I don't know that I want to

"That's a nice-looking

"No, there is

"if anybody has been

the building."

said the doctor.

Cicero nodded.

he asked.

city all the time."
"You can have it," said Cicero Jones, "and if anybody questions your right to take it, tell them I gave you permission."

to gout. "I hate it! Give me the

"You people think that all the tragedy and misery of life is found only in the cities—tucked away in noisome and picturesque slums," the doctor went on. "Bah! The real drama of life is played in these pleasant little country villages, these fine mansion houses." He waved his hand to the passing country. "Look for sin among the roses, my boy, not behind the ash cans."

"Anyway, they're real sins and real tragedies," said Cicero Jones composedly. "If you had lived, as I have, in an atmosphere of artificiality, you would welcome even a country murder, so long as there was a real body to see and a real murderer to hang! That is why I have come, to get close to the realities, doctor.

"Don't get too close," warned the other grimly, and then grasping Cicero's arm, he pointed to a stately white house that showed through a belt of elms on the slope of a distant hill. "Pretty picture, eh?" he asked, "but that house is owned and run by a lunatic! It is a fact! A homicide—and yet sufficiently clever to deceive the doctors who were sent to examine him. His wife and family lied in terror of him. Few servants stay more than a week, and every house in the neighborhood locks and bolts its doors before going to bed.' "How pleasant," said Cicero

Jones, but he shuddered. A few minutes later the doctor pointed through the other window of the Pullman.

nothing wrong with those people, 'Do you see that beautiful red fine, healthy, good-natured souls. brick house by the lake?" he asked. "Looks fine, eh? You can They are patients of mine. The daughter is a little mad, but I don't think dangerously so, but almost see the gardens from here Widdle himself is a kindly, good-natured fellow who wouldn't hurt -they are the grandest in the country. The woman who owns that property is suspected of mura fly. I always say that his keepdering her sister and doing away ers are absolutely unnecessary.

Why, when he shot that poach-

"Oh, did he shoot a poacher?" asked Cicero weakly. The doctor pointed out the iden-

"'Yes-that afternoon I met Reginald by the lake. I

accused him! He sneered at me! All the dormant

madness in me leaped to life! I sprang at himhe lost, his balance and fell into the water!

He tried to escape, but I thrust him down with my foot, down, down, down!"

tical oak tree and the exact spot thereunder where the deed had been committed. "I was going to say, I think he was well within his rights. Now, if you want a real lumatic—" he

was going on, but Cicero stopped him.

"I don't want a real lunatic,"
he said. "I want a real holiday.
But if ever I do want a real one,
doctor, I shall know where to

He watched the doctor disappear on his crazy trap and then climbed

into a fly. "Crap Apple Farm, sir, that's a matter of four miles from here." Over his shoulder the fly-man became conversational as his horse clop-clopped along the dusty road.

"Yes, it is a good four miles. At least, it is four miles from Hangman's Cross, and that's not half a mile from the station. I'll point it out to you. You haven't seen Hangman's Cross, have you?" Cicero admitted that he hadn't. "You ought to see it," the driver shook his head admiringly. was put up nigh on a hundred

years ago to commemorate a poor farmer who was killed by some sailors. They hanged him where the cross is—that was the scaf-fold," he explained. "I once met a very old woman in these parts who remembered it, too. She was at the execution, said he took an hour to die."

Cicero Jones sighed unhappily. "The funny thing about it," said the driver, after they had passed the worn granite cross, and he had stopped the fly in order to allow Cicero to get out and make a thorough inspection, "the funny thing about it is that that old farmer who was murdered used to live in that farm," he pointed with his whip. "We call it 'Gibbet House,' though some call it 'Suicide Manor.'

"Why not call it Wild Rose Cottage?" entreated Cicero Jones. "Because nobody ever wanted to call it that," said the driver gravely. "The funny thing about that house is that three people have committed suicide-"Don't tell me any more funny

stories," said Cicero, "or I shall laugh myself to death. Do you know Mr. Yeoman? 'Very Well, sir," said the flyman; "a very nice man and highly

respected in these parts. daughter is a bit queer. Eh?" said Cicero, startled. "When I say she is a bit queer, I mean she is not quite all there."

You mean she's mad?" "Well, I wouldn't go so far as saying that," said the flyman, "but she's certainly got a funny way with her, and they do say that the language she uses is terrible to

Cicero looked at his watch. for three hours.

'Tell me the worst," he said recklessly. 'The worst-well, that's about

all. I'm not saying that she's mad," said the driver, with vague apprehensions of a slander suit. "Far be it from me to say that, but there is something queer about her, by all accounts. And even the rector never goes to that house.'

"Is it pretty country about there?" asked Cicero.

"Yes, sir," said the driver en-thusiastically; "it is certainly the most beautiful country I have ever seen. There's a lovely stretch of water quite close to the house. Dead Man's Pool they call it." "I should have been surprised if

they hadn't," said Cicero, and for the rest of the journey was silent. He took his suit-case from the driver and stood at the gate of Crab Apple Farm with a wistful look on his face until the carriage had disappeared. The front door was open and he knocked. There was no response, but from somewhere within came the sound of voices raised in anger. He put down his suitcase, walked farther into the passage and opened the

door. And then he stopped.
"'You want the truth?' asked the passionate voice of a woman. Cicero Jones stood stock still. "'Yes, the whole truth. Where is Reginald?'"

The second voice was that of a woman, too, and peeping through the crack of a screen he saw two girls. The first was tall and pretty. Her hair was untidy, her breast heaved with pent emotion. She who faced her was not so tall nor in a sense so handsome. Her face was set in a mould of grim determination, her hands were

clenched. "You wish to know, sister?" she asked slowly.
"'Yes—I—wish to know,'"

said the other. "'Your lover is no more,' " said the smaller girl. The jaw of Cicero. Jones

What?" "'I-I have killed him!" " Her voice was intense.

The other started back with an And then Cicero saw the small rirl bend forward and speak rap-

idly.
"It was for the honor of our father family. It was to save our father learning the truth. I—I—knew that you were bigamously married. I discovered that yesterday.

"You discovered—the truth?" Cicero heard the gasp. "Yes-that afternoon I met Reginald by the lake. I accused

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